

Draft RI Litter Task Force Meeting Notes
September 25, 2003

Attending: Terri Bisson (DEM), Geoff DiCenso (RIACC, Chair), Robert Fleury (Pawtuxet River Authority), Lynn Ruggeri (RIACC), Anita SanAntonio (Food Dealers Association), Barry Schiller (Recorder, Sierra Club), Fred Vincent (DEM) and Tom Getz (DEM)

The Task Force reviewed the Litter Survey and cover letter drafts that G. DiCenso and L. Ruggeri provided. Some suggestions for shortening were made, and “permit fees” for food retailers were clarified. After discussion, consensus was to ask for returned surveys to be sent to DEM by December 1. G. DiCenso will send it out to the Conservation Commissions, (in the 9 towns without one, he will mail it to the local officials directly) asking they send it to chief elected officials, police chiefs, and public works directors. He would also ask the local Commissions to try to provide copies of local ordinances. He was advised to also send it to the River Councils/Watershed Associations. DEM will send the surveys to the Parks and Fish & Wildlife Division officials. A. SanAntonio would try to contact business interests such as Chambers of Commerce to see how they might participate in a litter survey.

T. Bisson indicated some South County legislators planned to introduce a “bottle bill” for glass containers. A. SanAntonio noted some objections the Food Dealers would have and this was included in a folder of litter related matter she distributed. B. Schiller noted Sierra Club support for container deposit legislation. It was agreed to disagree on this with both sides trying to accommodate the legitimate concerns of the other.

L. Ruggeri discussed some ideas on litter control from Keep America Beautiful (which does not have a RI affiliate) including model ordinances, economic benefits of litter control, and some connection to lower levels of crime, accidents, and fires. A report on an Urban Litter Forum was distributed to the Task Force, as was a copy of a May 2000 Washington State Final Litter Report. There was also some discussion of litter laws in Texas, Tennessee and Ohio.

F. Vincent indicated Dunkin Donuts was going to be a partner with DEM and DOT to help manage a reopened rest area on I-295 accessing the Blackstone Park. G. DiCenso noted such partnerships could encourage the competition to do likewise. R. Fleury noted the importance of anti-litter education and finding funding for this. It was thought the food dealers that pay litter control permit fees now being sent to the General Fund could be a force to help restore funding. The association indicated they would not support an increase in the fees since the existing fees are not being used for litter purposes. There was a discussion on expanding the fees to include bottled water. There are no fees on this category and the numbers of bottles sold are a significant source of litter.

The Task Force Planned to meet next at 3pm on Thurs Oct 16 at DEM to review the actual RI litter laws.